

THE FAITH HEALER AND THE QUEEN

A Published Report That May Spell Trouble for Juliana

What is the story behind all the furor over Queen Juliana of the Netherlands—one of Europe's few remaining monarchs?

Has a religious mystic—a faith healer who claims to talk with God—come between the Dutch Queen and her Prince Consort?

There are rumors of a Cabinet crisis and of possible abdication, of palace intrigue by a "female Rasputin" who claims divine guidance over the affairs of the royal family.

It was a West German weekly magazine, *Der Spiegel*, that first brought into the open the story of the Queen and the faith healer.

The Dutch promptly confiscated copies of the magazine.

Two days later the Netherlands Government officially denied rumors that the Queen and her husband were considering a divorce.

On these pages is an English translation of the story that stirred up all Europe.

CPYRGHT

The following is reprinted from "Der Spiegel"

FRANKFURT, Germany

Until now it has been a carefully kept state secret—what has been happening in the small, unimposing cabin in the back yard of a country estate in the little Dutch town of Baarn—for it might shake one of the last remaining thrones in Europe.

Only a 10-minute walk from the cabin stands Soestdijk Palace, where Queen Juliana of the Netherlands has fallen under the influence of a "miracle worker" who claims to receive divine orders. The American secret service, observing the case at the direction of its chief, Allen Dulles [Director of the Central Intelligence Agency], is faced again with a European enigma. An affair that seems to stem from a faith in obscure miracles is threatening the political stability of one of the countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Like the legendary monk, Rasputin, at the Tsarist court of Russia, 61-year-old Greet Hofmans at the Palace of Soestdijk has been utilizing the ailment of a royal child to gain influence over the Queen on political and personal matters.

[The Russian monk, Grigori Rasputin, came to the Court of St. Petersburg in 1907 and promised Czarina Alexandra to heal Crown Prince Alexis of a blood disease. He mixed in state affairs and was favored by Tsar Nicholas II despite the objections of important officials.

Rasputin was assassinated by Prince Yusupov in December, 1916.]

The role of the spinster, Greet Hofmans, like that of Rasputin in Tsarist Russia, has been completely unknown to the Netherlands. The few in the Court and Cabinet who know about it are divided into opposing camps and feuding so furiously that even the threat of a Government crisis no longer insures complete discretion.

Royal couple at odds. In the royal household, the conflict already has broken

out openly. The happy days of the marriage between Juliana, Princess of Orange-Nassau, and the German Prince Bernhard of Lippe-Biesterfeld are a matter of the past. While the Queen is bestowing her favor on the "faith healer" and heading a pro-Hofmans clique at the Court of Holland, her consort is heading an anti-Hofmans clique with the support of Socialist Premier Willem Drees.

Ironically, it was Prince Bernhard himself who brought the "miracle worker" to Soestdijk Palace. He first heard of Greet Hofmans while on a hunting trip in 1948. A Dutch general told him that the general's six-year-old daughter had been cured of tuberculosis.

The information greatly moved the Prince. Juliana and Bernhard have four daughters—Beatrix, 18; Irene, 16; Margriet, 13; and 9-year-old Maria Christina. The latter, called Marijke, was born with cataracts. As a baby, her sight deteriorated progressively. An operation partially saved the sight of one eye. In the other, Marijke is blind today—and, the doctors say, forever.

It was while Marijke was still a baby that the father first heard of the "miracle worker" in 1948. Until then, the life of Greet Hofmans had been filled with poverty and bitterness. As a 12-year-old child she went to work in a textile mill to help care for her sick mother. Slowly she worked herself up and became a sort of supervisor and welfare attendant.

"Call of God." Then at the age of 51 she received, by her own ac-



JULIANA WITH PRINCESS BEATRIX

The crown weighed heavily

FOIA b3b



THE FAITH HEALER AND THE QUEEN

[continued]
CPYRGHT

Government tried to exploit the event but was thwarted by Bernhard.

After the occupation of the Netherlands by the German troops, the royal family fled to England. Bernhard became an officer in the Royal Air Force and his wife and children went on to America. The group always set an example as a happy family. After the war, and after Juliana had ascended the throne, Bernhard confided to an American reporter his formula for harmony: "The country is ruled by my wife. I rule within our four walls."

Different from Juliana, who gives the impression of a capable housewife, Prince Bernhard is looked upon as a congenial aristocrat. His clothes are tailored in London. He pilots his own plane—a habit which has earned him the nickname, "the Flying Dutchman" in diplomatic circles. Good-will trips to South America and Africa proved his financial aptitude. He brought home good orders for Dutch industry. In his spare time he is an avid skier and horseman.

This little vanity of the Prince—his ambition as a horseman—led to the final clash between Bernhard and the "miracle worker" whose sinister shadow had fallen upon the Dutch throne and upon Bernhard's marriage.

A strange proposal. The failure of the healer to help his child, plus the estrangement of his wife, prompted the Prince in 1950 to urge a return to normal medical treatment for Marijke. Apparently to regain his favor, Greet Hofmans made the Prince Consort a peculiar offer. She knew of his ambition to become a member of the Dutch riding team in the Olympics, and she offered him God's help to enable him and his horse, "No, No, Nanette," to make the team in the preliminaries.

She asked for three hairs from the tail of "No, No, Nanette" because, as she explains, "I told him I would take them in my hand and pray for God's help. I knew that God would guide me in how to train and feed the horse."

The principle that was to be applied to hair from a horse's tail is nothing unusual in the practice of Greet Hofmans. She uses the same method with letters from sick people. She holds them in her hand and, without reading the contents, claims she knows what advice to give the letter writer.

The Prince, she claims, only "had to fulfill God's orders with love, patience and obedience" in order to become an Olympic winner. Prince Bernhard turned down the offer, with thanks.

Open break. Bernhard's patience was at an end. He put his foot down, and

Greet Hofmans was ejected from her room in Soestdijk Palace. The open clash had come. But the elderly adviser was so sure of her position with the Queen that she had no thought of giving up the game. She moved to a wooden hut which friends permitted her to use in nearby Baarn—and began to repay Bernhard for what he had done to her.

She deepened the split between Queen and Prince Consort. Miss Hofmans declares that in order to help a little child she needs the absolute confidence of both parents. Especially the father must dedicate himself completely to Christ. Thus, Bernhard has been



—Black Star Photo

PRIME MINISTER DREES
A new Cabinet?

saddled with the guilt for the continuing affliction of Marijke and the failure of attempts to heal her.

The effects these accusations had on the trusting Queen and mother soon became apparent to her close friends. A deep gulf was torn between the Queen and the Prince. Today, relations between the once-happy royal couple are so strained that members of the royal household have been instructed to design a plan that will separate the secretarial offices of the Queen and Prince. Up to now, these offices have worked jointly in Soestdijk Palace.

The family quarrel in the House of Orange became so intense that it was looked upon with mounting uneasiness by the Government. The Cabinet of Prime Minister Drees is solidly behind Prince Bernhard. The Prince Consort

and the Government are united against Greet Hofmans.

Mystic intrudes in politics. The anxieties of the Government were crystallized into action against Greet Hofmans when it became clear that her followers were using her influence to obtain key positions. The Queen has introduced Prime Minister Drees and at least two of his ministers to Greet Hofmans. Not bothering with long, religious introductions on those occasions, the "miracle worker" began to give advice about economics and politics to the ministers.

"Don't you take notes?" the spinster asked one member of the Cabinet rather indignantly during one of these visits.

"No," the minister replied. "I've got a well-trained memory."

Although Queen Juliana usually refrains from mentioning the name or the existence of Greet Hofmans during her official dealings with members of the Government, many ministers are of the opinion that the Hofmans clique will seize upon the chance to occupy decisive political positions if the Cabinet is reshuffled after last week's parliamentary elections.

The Queen's political power is strictly limited by the democratic Constitution of the Netherlands. But she can wield decisive powers if there should arise difficulties in creating a new Cabinet. In such cases, the ruler can influence the formation of a Government by saying whether a candidate for office has her favor or does not have it.

In case God should express certain wishes regarding the filling of ministerial posts in the new Dutch Government through the voice of Greet Hofmans, the chances for more power for the Hofmans followers are immeasurable.

Showdown soon? People in the know at the Palace of Soestdijk claim that the occasion of Prince Bernhard's 45th birthday on June 29 will show whether the conflict at court can be repaired or whether the situation will blow up completely.

Up to now, the Prince Consort has given a fashionable garden party each year on the occasion of his birthday. It still is not known whether the party will be given this year—or who will be invited.

Signs of impending difficulties in the Government have shown up in recent days. Several members of the present Cabinet have said they do not want to serve in a new Government.

The foregoing is reprinted from "Der Spiegel," weekly news magazine published in Frankfurt, Germany.